

IN COMMEMORATION OF THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE KENTUCKY COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

HON. JOHN A. YARMUTH

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 27, 2010

Mr. YARMUTH. Madam Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights on the occasion of the organization's fiftieth year.

In 1960, while the civil rights debate was raging across the country over the extension of Civil Rights to all Americans, Kentucky became the first state south of the Mason-Dixon line to establish a human rights commission.

Since that time, the pioneering members of the Commission have been an ally of all Kentuckians fighting for equality, fairness, and the equal application of justice. The Kentucky Commission on Human Rights is charged with enforcing State and Federal Civil Rights law. It is also tasked with a powerful mandate, remarkable in its scope and comprehensive in its aims;

"To safeguard all individuals within the state from discrimination because of familial status, race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age 40 and over, or because of the person's status as a qualified individual with a disability," reads the mandate. "Thereby to protect their interest in personal dignity and freedom from humiliation, to make available to the state their full productive capacities, to secure the state against domestic strife and unrest which would menace its democratic institutions, to preserve the public safety, health, and general welfare, and to further the interest, rights, and privileges of individuals within the state."

Those who have worked with the Commission throughout the last five decades have committed themselves to meeting the goals of that mandate. And that dedication is reflected not just in the law books of the Commonwealth, but in communities throughout Kentucky.

It was Kentucky that was the first southern state to pass a civil rights act and the first in the Nation to enact a fair housing law. And each and every day, the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights continues to fight to educate our citizens about how far we have come and how far we still have to go.

Every citizen of our Commonwealth can be proud of the legacy of the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights. I urge my colleagues to join me in congratulating the Commission for fifty years of dedication to the expansion of equal rights across our Commonwealth and honor their vision of a people united against discrimination and united for equality.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. W. TODD AKIN

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 27, 2010

Mr. AKIN. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 17—On the motion to suspend the rules and agree—H. Res. 990, Expressing support for designation of January 2010 as National Mentoring Month, had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MICHELE BACHMANN

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 27, 2010

Mrs. BACHMANN. Madam Speaker, on January 26, 2010, I was unexpectedly detained and could not vote on H. Res. 1003, expressing support for the designation of January 10, 2010, through January 16, 2010, as National Influenza Vaccination Week. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

HONORING JOHN TOUPS' CONTRIBUTION TO HEALTH CARE IN NORTHERN VIRGINIA

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 27, 2010

Mr. WOLF. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize John Touns' contribution to health care in northern Virginia. He has recently stepped down after more than 20 years of service on the Board of Trustees at Inova Health System in Fairfax County, Virginia.

In 1986, John began his service as a trustee on the board of the Fairfax Hospital Association, which is now known as the Inova Health System Board of Trustees. He served as vice-chairman from 1999–2003, and then as chairman from 2004–2007. For the past two years, John served on the board as past chairman.

During his voluntary tenure on the Inova board, John led Inova through a merger with Alexandria Hospital in 1997 and then with Loudoun Hospital in 2005. He has helped to establish funding for other health care initiatives to benefit patients and their families, and has long supported Inova's philanthropic priorities, including the Life with Cancer program.

Along with his work on the Board of Trustees for Inova, John found the time to serve as president of various community organizations, including the Northern Virginia Community Foundation, the George Mason University Foundation, and the Northern Virginia Roundtable.

In his professional life, John founded a civil engineering firm which later merged with the Planning Research Corporation. He retired as president and CEO of PRC in 1987.

I ask that my colleagues join me in recognizing John Touns and his significant contribution to the Inova Health System, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the entire northern Virginia community.

HONORING LINDA JOHNSON ON BEING NAMED WESTERN SPRINGS "WOMAN OF THE YEAR"

HON. DANIEL LIPINSKI

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 27, 2010

Mr. LIPINSKI. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Linda Johnson on being named the 2009 Western Springs "Woman of the Year."

Ms. Johnson was selected by the Citizen of the Year Committee from nominations sent in by community organizations and residents. She will be honored on January 30, 2010, at a dinner I will be attending with my wife, Judy.

A lifelong resident of Western Springs and the owner of Village True Value Hardware, Linda Johnson is a fixture of the community who is always there in her store helping customers. In 2005, Ms. Johnson started the "Glory Days" project, which enables students to deliver small American flags to each home in Western Springs every July 3rd.

Linda Johnson's many commitments make her a fixture in the community including serving as chair of the Adventist La Grange Memorial Hospital Foundation and events chair of the Western Springs Business Association. She is a member of the Western Springs Rotary Club, Lyons Township High School Alumni Board, West Suburban Chamber of Commerce and Industry, La Grange Area Business and Professional Women, and Earlham College Alumni Council. Ms. Johnson also served as president of the Western Springs Business Association and on the Village of Western Springs' Economic Development Commission.

Previously honored as "A Person of Distinction" in 2005 and a recipient of the State of Illinois Volunteerism Award in 2007, Linda Johnson will very deservedly being honored for her dedication to Western Springs.

I ask you to join me in honoring Linda Johnson for her outstanding service to her community and her recognition as the 2009 Western Springs Woman of the Year.

HONORING THE VITAMIN L PROJECT

HON. MAURICE D. HINCHEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 27, 2010

Mr. HINCHEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Vitamin L Project of Ithaca, New York on 20 years of service, and to commend the founders of this group, Jan and Janice Nigro, on their steadfast dedication to community service.

For two decades, the Vitamin L Project has taught young people throughout New York state the power of diversity and positive character development. In 1989, Jan and Janice conceptualized and launched the Project as an innovative model for teaching character education through the magic of song. It all began in Ithaca, New York when a teacher friend of Jan Nigro's asked him to write some songs for elementary-age children about the universal human values of diversity, love, truth, peace, and non-violence. This single request blossomed in 17 songs, and the Vitamin L transformative magic of character building was underway creating a library of uplifting and inspirational music.

Over time, the Vitamin L Chorus was established, which today includes approximately 80 young performers as well as a growing group of Vitamin L alumni. Jan's wife, Janice, serves as Vitamin L Project Director and works tirelessly to sustain the Project's mission through outreach to elementary schools, recruitment and training of youth singers, organizing concerts, and serving as mentor and coach to all Chorus members. Together, this husband-and-

wife team, along with enthusiastic Chorus members, and a host of supportive parents and community members, has touched the hearts and minds of children across New York State and other locations where Vitamin L has been invited to perform.

With its focus on early childhood development, Vitamin L encourages children to think about moral issues in a non-threatening, fun, and very personal way. By singing the songs, watching the Vitamin L Chorus act out scenes of things like the consequences of "jumping to conclusions" and having opportunities to talk with Vitamin L Chorus members, young audiences see the importance of valuing positive character and moral behavior.

Vitamin L's first published group character-building songs titled, "Walk a Mile," won the nationally recognized Parent's Choice Gold Award shortly after its release in 1989. Three more Vitamin L recordings of character building songs received similar praise from the Parent's Choice Gold Awards in subsequent years. The recordings have also received very positive reviews in numerous national publications, such as School Library Journal, Booklist, and Time Magazine.

I thank Jan and Janice Nigro for their unwavering commitment to improving their community and congratulate them on 20 successful years with the Vitamin L Project. Their contributions have touched countless people, and enriched the lives of my constituents in New York's 22nd Congressional District and well beyond. The world could use more people who contribute to their county, state, and country, like Jan and Janice and I am grateful for the work they have done, what they are doing today, and their bright future.

RECOGNIZING KAZAKHSTAN FOR
ASSUMING LEADERSHIP OF THE
ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY
AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE
(OSCE)

HON. ENI F.H. FALEOMAVEGA

OF AMERICAN SAMOA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 27, 2010

Mr. FALEOMAVEGA. Madam Speaker, amid regional combat, conflicts, and challenges, Kazakhstan assumed leadership this month of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), an organization of 56 member states with vast potential for strengthening regional and global cooperation, security, peace, and prosperity.

This is a remarkable historic achievement for a nation that only 19 years ago gained its independence from the former Soviet Union. It is also a recognition of the vision and leadership of Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev who has charted a course to establish not only a modern state but an emerging democracy.

In the early days of its statehood and under the leadership of President Nazarbayev, Kazakhstan demonstrated to the international community its commitment to nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation. It voluntarily renounced the world's fourth largest nuclear and missile arsenal and shut down the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site. This decision has enhanced global security and reduced the threat of weapons of mass destruction falling

into the hands of terrorists. Kazakhstan's experience qualifies it to lead the OSCE in its efforts to increase regional security.

Meanwhile, Kazakhstan has consistently demonstrated its commitment to the principles and values that OSCE member states embrace. The nation has achieved significant progress on democratization, human rights, and economic liberalization. This is no small feat for a country in which more than 140 different nationalities and 40 religions are represented. Yet surprisingly in Kazakhstan, these people and faiths coexist peaceably because of a commitment to the shared values of tolerance, understanding, cooperation, and unity.

Great steps have been made on the path of democracy, but many more strides must be taken before the goal is reached. That is why Kazakhstan views democracy not as a sprint but a marathon; its perspective is not for the short but the long term.

Because Kazakhstan understands the challenges of democracy-building and the importance of inter-ethnic and inter-faith dialogue to avoid or resolve conflict, this perspective and experience will serve it well in its OSCE leadership role.

Kazakhstan is a leading democratic force in Central Asia today, a region of growing strategic importance to the United States, the OSCE, and the world. Central Asia is where East and West meet. Increasingly, it is where much of our focus will and must be now and in the years ahead. As Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs subcommittee overseeing this region, I can state this unequivocally. It is also the reason my colleague Representative BUCK MCKEON and I recently established the Congressional Caucus on Central Asia.

Kazakhstan moves and interacts with ease and confidence in its home region and the surrounding areas that include Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, and Iran—all areas where it has interests that make dialogue and cooperation possible but not involvement that precludes it. Because of this, Kazakhstan can function as an honest and trusted broker, helping the United States and other OSCE members. This can lead to improved East-West dialogue and, hopefully, to conflict resolution.

For all the strengths, experiences, and perspectives that Kazakhstan offers, OSCE member states' choice of this new democracy to lead the organization showed correct judgment and foresight in light of the challenges and threats confronting the world. President Nazarbayev has matched the OSCE's judgment and foresight in appointing Secretary of State–Foreign Minister Kanat Saudabayev to serve as the OSCE Chairman-in-Office. This skilled and seasoned diplomat, who once served as Kazakhstan's Ambassador to the United States, will bring to his new post and the OSCE the needed leadership and focus on measurable results.

His recent speech in Vienna outlining Kazakhstan's priorities during its OSCE chairmanship reveals a commitment to revitalize the organization, reestablish its relevance on key issues, and refocus it to achieve meaningful outcomes. I am encouraged by the vision he sketched. In a world where new crises often seemingly intractable, even insoluble—emerge almost daily, we need an OSCE infused with purpose and energy and committed to full engagement and results. Knowing the OSCE Chairman-in-Office as I do, I am con-

fident that he can and will lead the organization to achieve the outcomes that all OSCE member states desire.

As a major step toward that end, I fully support the proposal that President Nazarbayev and OSCE Chairman-in-Office Saudabayev have put forward—namely, that of holding an OSCE summit. Not since 1999 has a summit been held. In my view, such an assembly would offer many advantages and opportunities to the United States and other OSCE member states for advancing the prospects and priorities of regional and global cooperation, security, peace, and prosperity.

The proposed summit warrants the United States' support and is worthy of our best efforts because it is in our national interest. For this reason, I call on President Obama and Secretary of State Clinton to help facilitate the summit through their good offices, and I look forward to working with Chairman-in-Office Saudabayev and the leaders of OSCE member states in any way I can to help execute the forward-looking vision that Kazakhstan has outlined for the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

HONORING THE ALBANY PARK
COMMUNITY CENTER

HON. MIKE QUIGLEY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 27, 2010

Mr. QUIGLEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Albany Park Community Center for receiving the League of Women Voters Award for outstanding leadership in voter education.

The Center received the award for its dedicated service to increase voter awareness and civic participation in the Albany Park community, a multi-ethnic, working class neighborhood in Chicago. In order to accomplish its goals, the Center held 25 adult education classes that focused on voting, placed bulletin boards with election-related content inside the Center, assisted voters in locating their polling places and understanding their local ballots, registered voters, and participated in the 2008 Mock Election coordinated with the League of Women Voters of Illinois. The Mock Election showed how successful their efforts had been when 318 of the 322 ballots were cast correctly.

They succeeded in reaching over 300 students through their adult education classes and successfully registered newly-naturalized citizens and others who had never voted or who let their registration lapse. Many of the students had levels of education or English language skills, and the program catered directly to their needs.

As part of the "Albany Park Votes!" program, members of the Center went above and beyond their job descriptions, aiding and registering 58 members of the community, most of whom went on to vote in the next election. The program was especially successful in educating the entire community in the civil process, as most of the adult students brought educational materials to their children and encouraged them to vote in the Mock Election, thereby reinforcing the importance of voting and preparing them for when they become eligible voters. In this way, Albany Park Community Center's program will have a long term